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ABSTRACT

Schools are influenced by the attitudes and behaviors of a wide variety of people within the home and community as well as the school itself, and an important aspect of efficient and productive school management is the need for key publics to agree as to whom is responsible for which tasks. The first step, however, must be to identify how key publics feel about the importance of basic types of tasks conducted in a school system and, further, to clarify the extent to which those same publics agree as to whom should have responsibility for each task. Sixteen educational tasks were chosen for inclusion in a questionnaire, which was sent to a sample population that included high school principals, 11th grade students, parents of 11th grade students, members of county boards of education, county superintendents, high school teachers, and State Department of Education personnel. Analysis of the survey showed the tasks are considered important by all of the publics, and that for each task there are unique patterns of expectations regarding task responsibility. The role that a given public expects itself to play is not necessarily the same as the role that other publics expect of it. These conflicts in role expectations may signal possible confusion and misunderstanding in accomplishing educational tasks. (DS)

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RESPONSIBILITY FOR EDUCATIONAL TASKS: ROLE PERCEPTIONS IN WEST VIRGINIA

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RESPONSIBILITY FOR EDUCATIONAL TASKS: ROLE PERCEPTIONS IN WEST VIRGINIA



1978

DANIEL B. TAYLOR
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Bureau of Planning, Research and Evaluation

WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Charleston, West Virginia 25305

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The findings of this study depended upon the support of a wide range of publics throughout West Virginia. Questionnaires were mailed to high school teachers and principals, county superintendents and school board members, State Department of Education personnel, parents and students. Although the questionnaire was necessarily complex and rather time consuming, the rate of return was extremely high from all groups. Such cooperation is highly appreciated and it is hoped that the results of the study will in turn assist those same groups in their respective educational endeavors.

The study was supported in part by a grant from the Mid-Atlantic Interstate Project funded through Title V, Section 505, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Much of the initial thinking regarding such a study was contributed by members of the project.

The study was conducted and written by Anthony M. Lynch, Janet Heinritz-Canterbury and John E. McClure. Special thanks are extended to Stanley Wearden of West Virginia University whose advice on a variety of technical matters was invaluable.



J. Douglas Machesney
Assistant State Superintendent
Planning, Research and Evaluation

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INTRODUCTION

Through a comprehensive survey of citizen opinion the State Board of Education has established goals for education in West Virginia. Attainment of these goals will require that a number of tasks be accomplished. As in similar situations in business or government, it is important to clarify which tasks are most important and who will be responsible for carrying out those tasks.

The variety of people responsible for accomplishing the aims of a given organization depends largely upon the degree to which the organization interacts with its environment -- whether it is a closed, self-contained organization or one that is relatively open, depending upon a system of interchange with its social surroundings. As relatively open social organizations, schools are influenced by the attitudes and behaviors of a wide variety of people within the home and community as well as the school itself. Accordingly, an important aspect of efficient and productive school management is the need for key publics to agree as to whom is responsible for which tasks. For example, teachers might feel that they should have a high degree of responsibility for determining what should be taught in schools while another public may think that teachers should have a low degree of responsibility for that task. The resolution of such a conflict in expectations can serve to improve the management of the schooling process and thereby enhance student learning.

The first step in such a process then is to identify how key publics feel about the importance of basic types of tasks conducted in a school system and, further, to clarify the extent to which those same publics agree as to whom should have responsibility for each task.

Recently the Bureau of Planning, Research and Evaluation of the West Virginia Department of Education asked a state-wide sample of seven such publics to indicate the importance of selected educational tasks and the degree of responsibility which each group, including their own group, should have for each task.

PROCEDURES

Selection of Educational Task Items for Questionnaire

As mentioned above, the school may be seen as an open social system depending heavily upon transactions with its environment in order to continue to function productively. As these transactions occur, a pattern of activities and relationships among people emerge. Such relationships and activities take place both within the school proper and between people inside and outside of the school. It is in the nature of these relationships that the role and function of the organization and its members can best be understood.

Literature on organizational theory suggests that such relations take place within five basic organizational subsystems.¹

The production or technical subsystem includes the actual process of getting the job done. In the case of the school, production would focus directly upon the process of teaching and learning.

The maintenance subsystem is concerned with preserving stability within the organization. In the school such a subsystem might include activities which tend to encourage predictability such as establishing hiring policies or enforcing school rules.

The boundary subsystem includes transactions with the environment of the organization designed to procure material and manpower, to encourage support for the organization and use of its products. In a school system such activities might include the development of healthy students and the initiation of school-community dialogue.

The adaptive subsystem is concerned with ascertaining the changing needs and demands of the environment in order that the organization may adjust itself accordingly. In terms of the school organization such activities might include determination of appropriate curriculum, graduation requirements and the location of schools.

The managerial subsystem cuts across all of the first four subsystems and is primarily concerned with policy formulation and coordination of the other subsystems of the organizations. Managerial activities in a school setting might include such tasks as establishing school rules and resolving internal conflicts.

These five subsystems served as a general guide to the type of tasks selected as items for inclusion in the survey questionnaire. Specific tasks were further selected on the basis of their potential to reflect some of the home, school and community variables and suggested as possible influences upon student achievement by numerous student achievement studies.²

The tasks are as follows:

- Determining the type of teacher to be hired
- Improving the quality of teaching
- Determining how much money teachers should be paid
- Resolving the personal problems of students

¹Katz, Daniel and Kahn, Robert, The Social Psychology of Organizations, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York, 1966.

²Averch, et al., How Effective is Schooling? A Critical Review and Synthesis of Research Findings, Appendix A, pp. 167-206, Rand, Santa Monica, California, 1972.

Selecting textbooks

Determining the type of teaching techniques that should be used

Providing students with an adequate diet

Telling the community what the school is doing

Establishing graduation requirements

Enforcing school rules

Determining what should be taught in schools

Resolving conflicts between students and teachers

Determining whether teachers are doing what they are supposed to do

Determining the number of students per teacher

Establishing school rules

Determining where a new school should be located.

Sampling

Respondents were selected as members of seven publics. The publics were chosen because of their involvement with or influences upon the public high school and included high school principals, 11th grade students, parents of 11th grade students, members of county boards of education, county superintendents, high school teachers, and State Department of Education personnel in positions from Coordinator up to State Superintendent. Three of the publics; high school principals, State Department of Education personnel, and county superintendents were small and all members of these publics received questionnaires. County school boards were represented by one member selected in a random manner from each county board.

The sampling design for 11th grade students, parents of 11th grade students, and high school teachers was a two-stage stratified random sample. In the first stage all high schools were assigned to one of six strata based on the size of the community (1970 census data) in which the school was located and the 1974-75 enrollment of the school for grades ten through twelve. Approximately 20 percent of the schools were randomly selected from each of the six strata. Teachers, parents, and students were then randomly selected from each of these schools. A major consideration in selecting a two-stage sampling design was that this design involves a relatively small number of schools, 35, allowing administrative contacts to be made with greater ease than with the larger number of schools that might result if a one-stage design had been used.

Following is the stratification scheme which was used:

<u>Stratum</u>	<u>Size of Community</u>	<u>Size of 10-12 Enrollment</u>	<u>Total Number of Schools in the Stratum</u>	<u>Number of Schools in a 20% Sample</u>
R1	0 - 10,000	0 - 200	37	7
R2	0 - 10,000	200 - 350	49	10
R3	0 - 10,000	350 - 550	31	6
R4	0 - 10,000	551 - 1539	34	7
U1	> 10,000	208 - 900	9	2
U2	> 10,000	901 - 2528	15	3

Total schools in population: 175

Total schools in sample: 35

The student sample was chosen by selecting 15 student names at random from each of the 35 sample schools from a list of all eleventh grade students who took the statewide achievement test battery in the fall of 1975.

The parent sample was chosen by first obtaining 15 additional student names from the same list and in the same manner as for the student sample. Secondly, in a telephone contact with each of the 35 schools, a home address and a parent name were requested for each of these 15 students. The students from this second list of 15 names did not receive a questionnaire; only one of their parents received one.

The teacher sample for each of the 35 schools was chosen at random from the listing of teachers in the West Virginia Education Directory 1975-76. The number of teachers sampled from each school was based on the proportion of teachers each school contributed to its respective stratum.

Table 1 summarizes the population size, questionnaires mailed and received and percent returned for each public.

TABLE 1
POPULATION SIZE, NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES MAILED
AND RETURNED AND PERCENT RETURNED BY PUBLIC

Public	Population Size	Questionnaires Mailed	Questionnaires Returned	Percent Returned
High School Principals	176	176	152	86
Parents of Eleventh Grade Students	52,940	525	296	56
County Board Members	275	55	39	71
County Superintendents	55	55	52	95
High School Teachers	5,888	245	181	74
State Department Personnel	57	57	52	91
Eleventh Grade Students	26,470	525	452	86

Data Collection and Analysis

Questionnaires were mailed to all publics between April 12 and April 19, 1976, with return requested by May 1, 1976. A second mailing was sent to all board members and to all parents and teachers in schools whose response rate was low. Over 50 percent of the questionnaires were returned by each of the publics. The highest response rate was 96 percent for the county superintendents.

For the publics which were not sampled - high school principals, State Department of Education personnel, and county superintendents a weight of 1.0 was used in the analysis. For publics where a sampling was used - county board members, high school teachers, high school students, and parents of high school students - the results were weighted to reflect the actual population of the school. Weighted percentages were computed for all cells on the questionnaires for each public.

FINDINGS

Importance of Tasks

As mentioned above, the primary aim of the study was to identify potential conflicts between educational publics regarding who should have responsibility for selected educational tasks. However, before the results of such an analysis are presented, it seems reasonable to ask whether or not those publics think the tasks are important, since it would be of little value to analyze responsibility patterns for a task which is seen as inconsequential.

Accordingly, each respondent was given a list of the sixteen tasks and asked to indicate the importance of each task on a scale offering four choices: high, medium, slight and no importance. For purposes of analysis and presentation the responses to these four choices have been collapsed into two categories. Responses to the categories, "high importance" and "medium importance" have been combined and are presumed to indicate importance, while the categories "slight importance" and "no importance" have been combined and presumed to indicate unimportance.

Table 2 summarizes the percentage of each public indicating that each task is important and also shows the average percentage of all publics for each task. Looking first at the average percentage of all publics combined, we see that for twelve of the tasks at least 90 percent of the population indicate that those tasks are important; for two of the tasks slightly less than 90 percent of the population indicate those tasks are important; and for two more of the tasks at least 74 percent of the population indicate that those tasks are important. In other words, even the two tasks which are seen as least important -- "Providing Students with an Adequate Diet" and "Determining Where a New School Should be Located" -- are still thought to be important by approximately three fourths of the population.

Regarding the responses of the individual publics the lowest percentage is well above 50 percent. One general pattern that should be noted is that the percentage of students indicating that the tasks are important is lower than the average on all sixteen items. Overall, then, it is safe to say that the publics involved in the study think that all sixteen tasks are important.

TABLE 2
PERCENTAGE OF EACH PUBLIC INDICATING
HIGH OR MEDIUM IMPORTANCE
AND AVERAGE PERCENTAGE FOR ALL PUBLICS
BY EDUCATIONAL TASK

	HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL	PARENTS	COUNTY BOARD MEMBERS	COUNTY SUPERIN- TENDENTS	HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS	STATE DEPART- MENT	ELEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS	AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OVER ALL PUBLICS
Determining the type of teacher to be hired	89.5	90.9	89.8	90.4	94.9	92.3	87.7	90.7
Improving the quality of teaching	99.4	99.4	97.5	100.0	106.0	100.0	92.4	98.3
Determining how much money teachers should be paid	88.9	91.2	92.3	96.2	97.7	96.2	78.1	91.5
Resolving the personal problems of students	92.1	91.8	97.5	98.0	87.2	84.6	84.0	90.7
Selecting textbooks	90.1	96.9	97.4	96.2	99.1	86.6	90.9	93.8
Determining the type of teaching techniques that should be used	87.5	94.7	94.9	96.2	84.2	86.6	86.1	90.0
Providing students with an adequate diet	74.3	78.0	79.4	82.7	72.1	75.0	58.9	74.3
Telling the community what the school is doing	98.1	81.6	92.3	100.0	88.9	98.0	71.3	90.0
Establishing graduation requirements	92.7	93.1	97.4	92.3	94.7	84.6	91.8	92.3
Enforcing school rules	98.1	94.8	94.9	94.3	99.7	82.7	84.9	92.7
Determining what should be taught in schools	98.6	97.9	97.5	96.2	95.6	100.0	91.3	96.7
Resolving conflicts between students and teachers	94.7	91.1	97.4	92.3	93.8	86.5	86.1	91.7
Determining whether teachers are doing what they are supposed to do	98.0	97.4	97.4	96.2	94.9	94.2	90.2	95.4
Determining the number of students per teacher	90.1	89.4	89.8	84.7	97.4	75.0	64.2	84.3
Establishing school rules	94.1	93.4	94.8	86.5	96.1	76.9	84.5	89.4
Determining where a new school should be located	75.0	81.5	92.3	78.9	73.5	71.2	64.7	76.7

Responsibility for Tasks

To clarify perceptions regarding who should have responsibility for educational tasks, respondents were given a list of tasks and asked to indicate the degree of responsibility which each of the groups, including their own, should have for each of the tasks. The actual question was "What degree of responsibility should each [group] have?" The choices were high, medium, low and none.

While such a scale was necessary in order to offer a full range of options, the main concern of the study is the responses to the category "high responsibility." Assigning or accepting a high degree of responsibility for a task is a relatively unequivocal statement. Such statements are significant since the focus of the study is to identify conflict of opinions. Such conflict can best be determined by comparing strong, definite statements which leave little doubt as to the intentions of the respondent.

From this data two basic questions can be answered:

- (1) Which publics accept high responsibility for a given task?
- (2) Which publics are in disagreement as to who should have high responsibility for a given task?

The answers to the first question are obtained by identifying the percentage of each public assigning high responsibility to itself. For example, 99 percent of the principals indicate that they should have high responsibility for "Determining the Type of Teachers to Be Hired," while only 14 percent of the teachers assign high responsibility to themselves for that same task. In the following pages each task will be analyzed in terms of the self-assignment of high responsibility by each public.

In addition to analyzing the extent to which each public assigns high task responsibility to itself, we can analyze the extent to which each public assigns such responsibility to each of the other publics. More specifically, this report will be concerned with identifying areas of disagreement between the extent to which a given public assigns high responsibility to itself and the extent to which other publics assign such responsibility to that given public. In other words, although a public may assign itself high responsibility for a task, other publics may not share that view. Such a situation may signal a conflict of opinion which may require attention by the parties involved and others concerned with accomplishing the task. The assumption behind such an approach is that goals can best be achieved when there is agreement regarding responsibility for the required tasks and that the first step in arriving at such consensus is to identify which groups are in conflict over which tasks.

In order to highlight such "disagreements," a criterion which would discriminate between opinions was established. The need for such a criterion can perhaps best be described through use of a hypothetical example: If X percent of superintendents assign high responsibility

for a task to themselves while Y percent of parents assign high responsibility for this task to superintendents, how great must be the difference between X and Y before it can be considered a disagreement?

The first assumption of the present research team was that there was no criterion which could be considered a "magic" number and be used to identify differences absolutely. Rather, such a criterion should be selected for its usefulness relative to the actual range of response. For example, using a difference of one percentage point would be useless since virtually every public would be considered to be in conflict. Conversely, if an extremely high number of percentage points, such as 75, were to be used, no disagreement would be evident.

Accordingly, an inductive process was used in which various criteria were applied and their ability to discriminate considered. In the judgment of the research team a spread of 20 percentage points provided appropriate discrimination.

The following tables and accompanying commentary answer two basic questions for each of the sixteen tasks, namely, what percentage of each public assign themselves high responsibility for the task, and which publics are in disagreement with that self-assignment?*

*Unless noted with a (+) sign all disagreements are in a negative direction; that is, the disagreeing public would assign less responsibility than a public assigns to itself. When a disagreeing public is followed by a (+) it signifies that they would assign more responsibility than a public assigns to itself.

TABLE 3

EDUCATIONAL TASK: DETERMINING THE TYPE OF TEACHER TO BE HIRED	
PERCENTAGE OF EACH PUBLIC ASSIGNING HIGH RESPONSIBILITY TO THEMSELVES	PUBLICS IN DISAGREEMENT WITH THE SELF ASSIGNMENTS
100% • Principals	Parents, Students
• Superintendents	Principals, Parents, Teachers, Students
80% • Board Members	Principals, Superintendents
60%	
40% • SDE Personnel	
20% • Parents • Students • Teachers	
0%	

EDUCATIONAL TASK: DETERMINING THE TYPE OF TEACHER TO BE HIRED

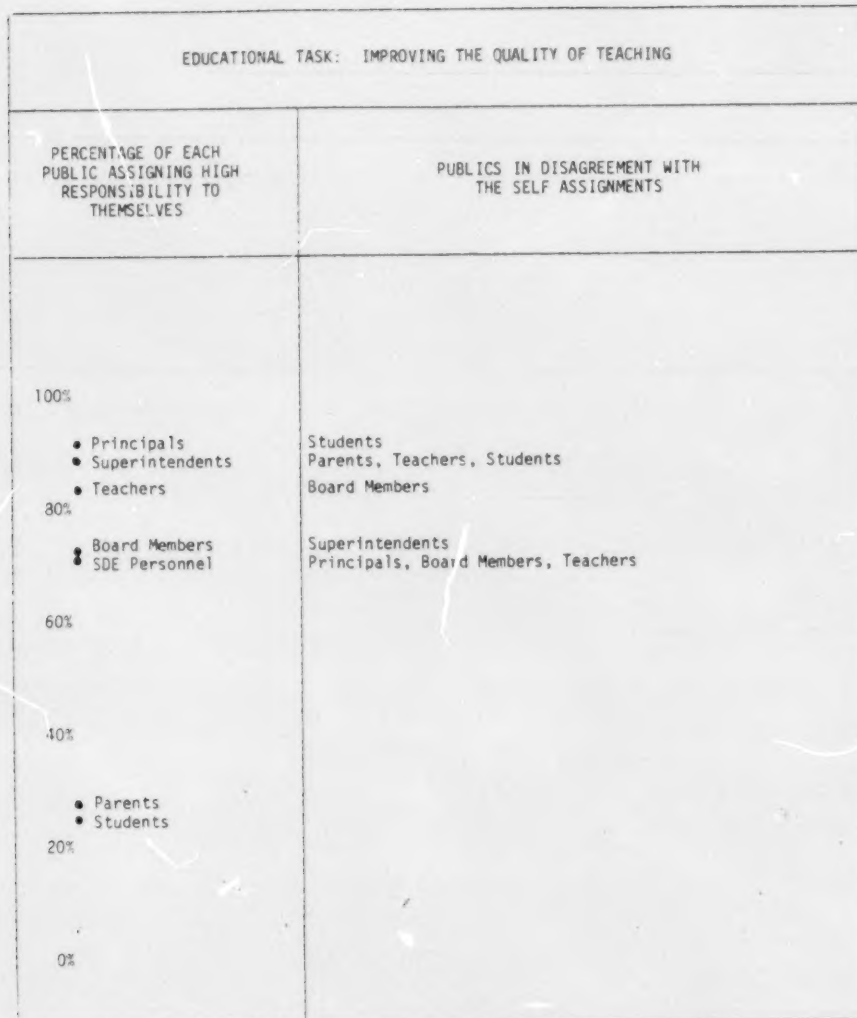
Self-Assignments: Almost 100% of principals assign themselves high responsibility for this task with superintendents and board members also at a high level.

Agreements: All publics agree with the relatively low self-assignments of State Department of Education (SDE) personnel, parents, students, and teachers.

Disagreements: There is a good deal of disagreement regarding the high self-assignments. Parents and students disagree with the self-assignment of principals and four publics disagree with the self-assignment of superintendents. Principals disagree with both superintendents and board members.

Comments: Principals assign themselves very high responsibility for "Determining the Type of Teacher to be Hired" and apparently do not wish to share that same level of responsibility with superintendents or board members.

TABLE 4



EDUCATIONAL TASK: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

Self-Assignments: A large percentage of principals, superintendents and teachers assign themselves high responsibility for this task with board members and SDE personnel close behind.

Agreements: All publics agree with the relatively low self-assignment of parents and students.

Disagreements: The self-assignment of superintendents is questioned by parents, teachers and students. Similarly teachers are questioned by board members; board members by superintendents; and SDE personnel by principals, board members, and teachers.

Comments: Attention might be focused here upon superintendents and SDE personnel, many more of whom assign themselves high responsibility for "Improving the Quality of Teaching" than is assigned to them by three of the other publics.

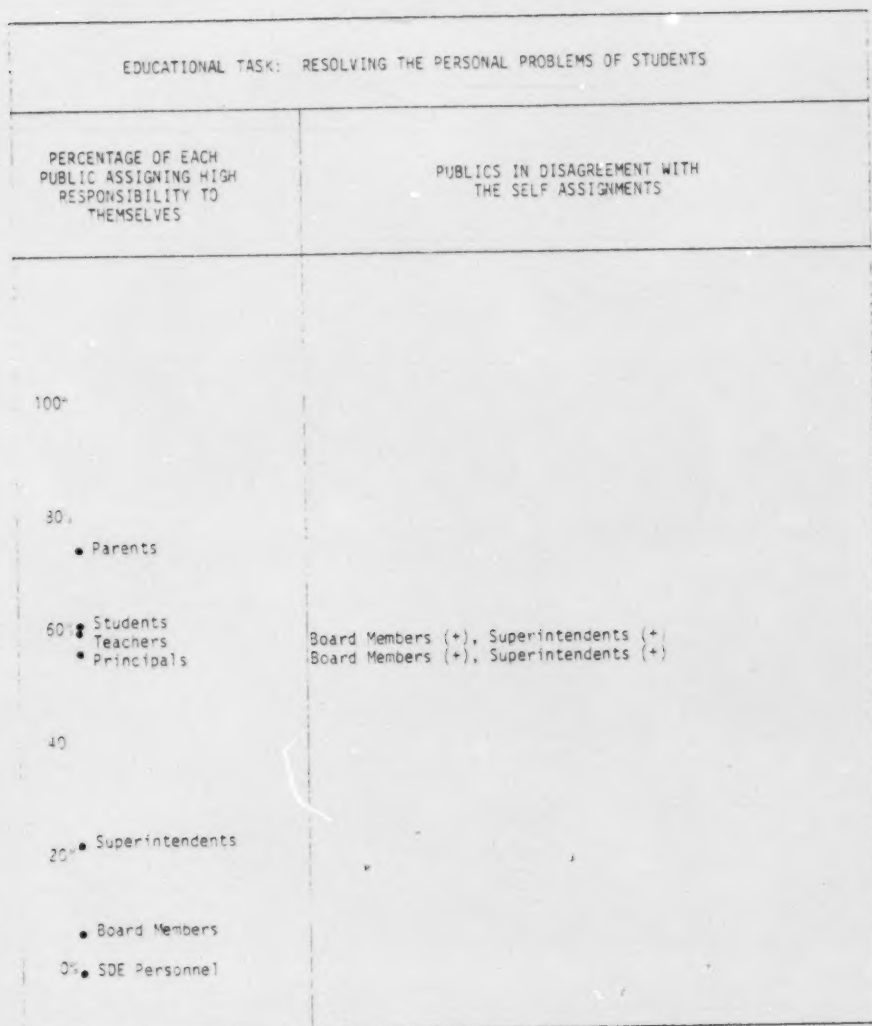
TABLE 5

EDUCATIONAL TASK: DETERMINING HOW MUCH MONEY TEACHERS SHOULD BE PAID	
PERCENTAGE OF EACH PUBLIC ASSIGNING HIGH RESPONSIBILITY TO THEMSELVES	PUBLICS IN DISAGREEMENT WITH THE SELF ASSIGNMENTS
100%	
80%	
• Superintendents	Parents, Teachers, Students
• Board Members	SDE Personnel (+)
60% • Teachers	Parents, Board Members, Superintendents, SEA Personnel, Students
• SDE Personnel	Principals (+), Parents (+), Superintendents (+), Teachers (+), Students (+)
40%	
20% • Principals	
• Parents	
0% • Students	

EDUCATIONAL TASK: DETERMINING HOW MUCH MONEY TEACHERS SHOULD BE PAID

- Self-Assignments:** Superintendents clearly assign themselves high responsibility for this task, with board members, teachers, and SDE personnel following closely. A relatively low percentage of principals, parents, and students assign themselves high responsibility for the task.
- Agreements:** All publics agree with the low self-assignments of principals, parents and students.
- Disagreements:** Parents, teachers and students assign superintendents less responsibility than superintendents assign themselves. With the exception of board members, all publics assign SDE personnel more responsibility than SDE personnel assign to themselves, while SDE personnel assign board members greater responsibility than board members give themselves. It is also interesting to note that all groups except principals disagree with the teacher's self-assignment.
- Comments:** There are a relatively high number of disagreements regarding which publics should have responsibility for this task. However, there is complete agreement regarding which publics are not responsible.

TABLE 6



EDUCATIONAL TASK: RESOLVING THE PERSONAL PROBLEMS OF STUDENTS

Self-Assignments: Although none of the publics surveyed assign themselves an extremely high level of responsibility for this task, parents' self-assignment is clearly the highest, with students, teachers and principals clustered at a slightly lower level.

Agreements: There is agreement with the relatively high self-assignments of parents and students and with the relatively low self-assignments of superintendents, board members and SDE personnel.

Disagreements: For this task board members and superintendents assign a greater degree of responsibility to teachers and principals than these publics assign to themselves.

Comments: There is general consensus regarding who should have high responsibility for "Resolving the Personal Problems of Students" except that more responsibility is assigned to teachers and principals than these publics assign themselves.

TABLE 7

EDUCATIONAL TASK: SELECTING TEXTBOOKS	
PERCENTAGE OF EACH PUBLIC ASSIGNING HIGH TASK RESPONSIBILITY TO THEMSELVES	PUBLICS IN DISAGREEMENT WITH THE SELF ASSIGNMENTS
100% • Teachers	Parents, Board Members, Students
80% • Board Members • Superintendents	Teachers Teachers, Students
60% • Principals • Parents • Students • SDE Personnel	Board Members (+), Superintendents (+) Principals, Superintendents, Teachers, Students Principals, Board Members, Superintendents, Teachers Parents (+)
40%	
20%	
0%	

EDUCATIONAL TASK: SELECTING TEXTBOOKS

Self-Assignments: Teachers clearly feel that they should have high responsibility for "Selecting Textbooks". Grouped at a distinctly lower level are board members and superintendents. Principals, parents, students and SDE personnel form a third cluster at a relatively low level.

Agreements: There are no self-assignments with which all publics agree.

Disagreements: Although teachers assign themselves high responsibility, parents, board members, and students disagree. At the same time, teachers disagree with the next highest self-assignment groups, board members and superintendents. Board members and superintendents assign more responsibility to principals than principals assign to themselves and parents feel similarly about SDE personnel. Four publics, including teachers disagree with the self-assignment of parents.

Comments: It might be noted that there are frequent disagreements over who should have high responsibility for selecting textbooks. Teachers assign themselves high responsibility and apparently do not wish to share that degree of responsibility with other publics. However, three of the publics do not assign such a high degree of responsibility to teachers.

TABLE 8

EDUCATIONAL TASK: DETERMINING THE TYPE OF TEACHING TECHNIQUES THAT SHOULD BE USED	
PERCENTAGE OF EACH PUBLIC ASSIGNING HIGH RESPONSIBILITY TO THEMSELVES	PUBLICS IN DISAGREEMENT WITH THE SELF ASSIGNMENTS
100% • Teachers	Board Members, Students
80% • Superintendents	Principals, Parents, Teachers, SDE Personnel, Students
60% • Principals	Superintendents (+)
40% • Board Members	Principals, Teachers
• Students	Principals, Board Members, Superintendents, Teachers
20% • Parents • SDE Personnel	Superintendents, Teachers Parents (+)
0%	

EDUCATIONAL TASK: DETERMINING THE TYPE OF TEACHING TECHNIQUES THAT SHOULD BE USED

Self-Assignments: Almost all teachers assign themselves high responsibility for this task. Superintendents are at a somewhat lower level with principals at a third level followed by the remaining publics at a relatively low level of self-assignment.

Agreements: There are no self-assignments with which all publics agree.

Disagreements: Board members and students disagree with the high self-assignment of teachers while all publics except board members disagree with the self-assignment of superintendents. Superintendents assign higher responsibility to principals than principals assign to themselves. Four of the publics disagree with the relatively low self-assignment of students.

Comments: It is clear that teachers assign themselves high responsibility for "Determining the Type of Teaching Techniques that Should be Used", although not all publics agree. Perhaps the most obvious point of disagreement is the self-assignment of superintendents.

EDUCATIONAL TASK: PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH AN ADEQUATE DIET	
PERCENTAGE OF EACH PUBLIC ASSIGNING HIGH RESPONSIBILITY TO THEMSELVES	PUBLICS IN DISAGREEMENT WITH THE SELF ASSIGNMENTS
100%	
80%	
60%	
• Parents	Teachers (+), SDE Personnel (+)
40% • Superintendents	Board Members
• Students	Superintendents (+)
• Principals	
• Board Members	
20% • SDE Personnel	Parents (+)
0%	
• Teachers	

EDUCATIONAL TASK: PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH AN ADEQUATE DIET

- Self-Assignments:** Parents have the highest self-assignment followed fairly closely by all other publics except teachers, who assign themselves almost no high responsibility for this task.
- Agreements:** All publics agree with teachers relatively low self-assignment for the task.
- Disagreements:** Both teachers and SDE personnel assign parents more responsibility than parents assign themselves, and parents feel similarly about SDE personnel.
- Comments:** It is interesting to note that no group assigns itself a great amount of high responsibility. Even students assign themselves a relatively low degree of responsibility.

EDUCATIONAL TASK: TELLING THE COMMUNITY WHAT THE SCHOOL IS DOING	
PERCENTAGE OF EACH PUBLIC ASSIGNING HIGH RESPONSIBILITY TO THEMSELVES	PUBLICS IN DISAGREEMENT WITH THE SELF ASSIGNMENTS
100% • Principals	Board Members, Students
80% • Superintendents	Parents, Students
• Board Members	Parents, Students
60% • Teachers • Students	Board Members
40%	
• SDE Personnel	
20% • Parents	
0%	

EDUCATIONAL TASK: TELLING THE COMMUNITY WHAT THE SCHOOL IS DOING

- Self-Assignments:** Principals assign themselves a high degree of responsibility with superintendents and board members at a slightly lower level. Teachers and students are grouped at a third level with SDE personnel and parents assigning themselves a small degree of high responsibility for this task.
- Agreements:** All publics agree with the low self-assignments of SDE personnel and parents.
- Disagreements:** Students disagree with the self-assignments of principals, superintendents, and board members. Parents and board members also disagree with the high self-assignments of superintendents and board members.
- Comments:** There is relatively little disagreement regarding which publics should have high responsibility for this task.

EDUCATIONAL TASK: ESTABLISHING GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS	
PERCENTAGE OF EACH PUBLIC ASSIGNING HIGH RESPONSIBILITY TO THEMSELVES	PUBLICS IN DISAGREEMENT WITH THE SELF ASSIGNMENTS
100%	
• SDE Personnel	Parents, Students
• Board Members	Parents, Students
80%	
• Superintendents	Students
• Principals	SDE Personnel
60%	
40%	
• Students	Board Members, Superintendents, Teachers
• Teachers	
20%	
• Parents	
0%	

EDUCATIONAL TASK: ESTABLISHING GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Self-Assignments: A large percentage of SDE personnel and board members assign themselves high responsibility for this task. Grouped at a second level are superintendents and principals with the remaining publics at a relatively low level.

Agreements: All publics agree with the low self-assignments of parents and teachers regarding this task.

Disagreements: Parents and students disagree with the high self-assignment of SDE personnel and board members.

Comments: Students disagree with the three highest self-assignments and in turn, board members, superintendents and teachers disagree with students' self-assignment.

TABLE 12

EDUCATIONAL TASK: ENFORCING SCHOOL RULES	
PERCENTAGE OF EACH PUBLIC ASSIGNING HIGH RESPONSIBILITY TO THEMSELVES	PUBLICS IN DISAGREEMENT WITH THE SELF ASSIGNMENTS
100% • Principals	
• Teachers	
80%	
60% • Board Members	Students
• Superintendents	Students
40% • Parents	Students
• Students	
20%	
• SDE Personnel	Parents (+), Students (+)
0%	

EDUCATIONAL TASK: ENFORCING SCHOOL RULES

Self-Assignments: Principals and teachers clearly see themselves as having high responsibility for this task. Board members and superintendents are grouped at a lower level followed by parents and students. SDE personnel clearly want very little responsibility for this task.

Agreements: All publics agree with the high self-assignments of principals and teachers.

Disagreements: Students disagree most frequently. They assign board members, superintendents and parents less responsibility than those publics assign to themselves, and they assign SDE personnel more responsibility than that group assigns to itself.

Comments: It is interesting to note that both parents and students assign SDE personnel greater responsibility than SDE personnel assign to themselves.

TABLE 13

EDUCATIONAL TASK: DETERMINING WHAT SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS	
PERCENTAGE OF EACH PUBLIC ASSIGNING HIGH RESPONSIBILITY TO THEMSELVES	PUBLICS IN DISAGREEMENT WITH THE SELF ASSIGNMENTS
100%	
80% • Principals • Board Members	Parents, Students Teachers, Students
• Teachers • Superintendents • SDE Personnel	Students Students
60%	
40% • Students • Parents	Parents, Board Members, Superintendents, Teachers Teachers
20%	
0%	

EDUCATIONAL TASK: DETERMINING WHAT SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS

Self-Assignments: Five of the seven publics assign themselves a medium degree of responsibility for this task.

Agreements: All publics agree with the rather moderate self-assignment of SDE personnel.

Disagreements: Students disagree with the self-assignment of four publics: principals, board members, teachers and superintendents, and in turn, three of these groups disagree with students' self-assignment.

Comments: No public assigns themselves high responsibility for this task. With the exception of SDE personnel, students do not assign a particularly high degree of responsibility to any public.

TABLE 14

EDUCATIONAL TASK: RESOLVING CONFLICTS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND TEACHERS	
PERCENTAGE OF EACH PUBLIC ASSIGNING HIGH RESPONSIBILITY TO THEMSELVES	PUBLICS IN DISAGREEMENT WITH THE SELF ASSIGNMENTS
100% • Principals	
80% • Teachers	
• Students	Principals
60% • Parents	Teachers
40%	
20% • Superintendents • Board Members	
0% • SDE Personnel	

EDUCATIONAL TASK: RESOLVING CONFLICTS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

- Self-Assignments:** Principals and teachers assign themselves a high degree of responsibility with students assigning themselves slightly less. Superintendents, board members, and SDE personnel assign themselves a low degree of high responsibility for the task.
- Agreements:** There is agreement among all groups regarding the high self-assignments and the low self-assignments.
- Disagreements:** Principals assign students less responsibility than students assign themselves while teachers assign parents less than parents assign themselves.
- Comments:** There is very little disagreement regarding the self-assignments for this task.

TABLE 15

EDUCATIONAL TASK: DETERMINING WHETHER TEACHERS ARE DOING WHAT THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO DO	
PERCENTAGE OF EACH PUBLIC ASSIGNING HIGH RESPONSIBILITY TO THEMSELVES	PUBLICS IN DISAGREEMENT WITH THE SELF ASSIGNMENTS
100% • Principals • Superintendents	Parents, Teachers, SDE Personnel, Students
80%	
60% • Teachers	Superintendents
• Board Members	Parents (+)
40% • Parents • Students	Principals, Board Members, Superintendents, Teachers, SDE Personnel Board Members, Superintendents, Teachers
20% • SDE Personnel	Parents (+), Students (+)
0%	

EDUCATIONAL TASK: DETERMINING WHETHER TEACHERS ARE DOING WHAT THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO DO

Self-Assignments: Principals assign themselves a high degree of responsibility for this task with superintendents assigning themselves a slightly lower degree of responsibility. Teachers assign themselves medium responsibility with board members, parents, students and SDE personnel grouped at a relatively low level of high responsibility for this task.

Agreements: All publics agree with the principals' self-assignment.

Disagreements: Four publics disagree with the high self-assignment of superintendents. All publics except students assign parents even less responsibility than parents give themselves.

Comments: Principals are clearly responsible for this task with no other public having unchallenged high responsibility.

EDUCATIONAL TASK: DETERMINING THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS PER TEACHER	
PERCENTAGE OF EACH PUBLIC ASSIGNING HIGH RESPONSIBILITY TO THEMSELVES	PUBLICS IN DISAGREEMENT WITH THE SELF ASSIGNMENTS
100%	
• Superintendents	Parents, Teachers, SDE Personnel, Students
80%	
• Principals	Principals, Board Members, Superintendents, SDE Personnel
• Teachers	Students
• Board Members	
60%	
• SDE Personnel	
40%	
20%	
• Students	
• Parents	
0%	

EDUCATIONAL TASK: DETERMINING THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS PER TEACHER

Self-Assignments: Superintendents have the highest self-assignment with principals, teachers, and board members grouped at a slightly lower level. Students and parents assign themselves little responsibility for this task.

Agreements: All publics agree with the relatively low self-assignment of parents, students and SDE personnel, as well as with the relatively high self-assignment of principals.

Disagreements: There are frequent disagreements with the self-assignments of superintendents and teachers.

Comments: Principals emerge as the public assigning itself high responsibility without dispute while the self-assignments of superintendents and teachers receive a number of challenges.

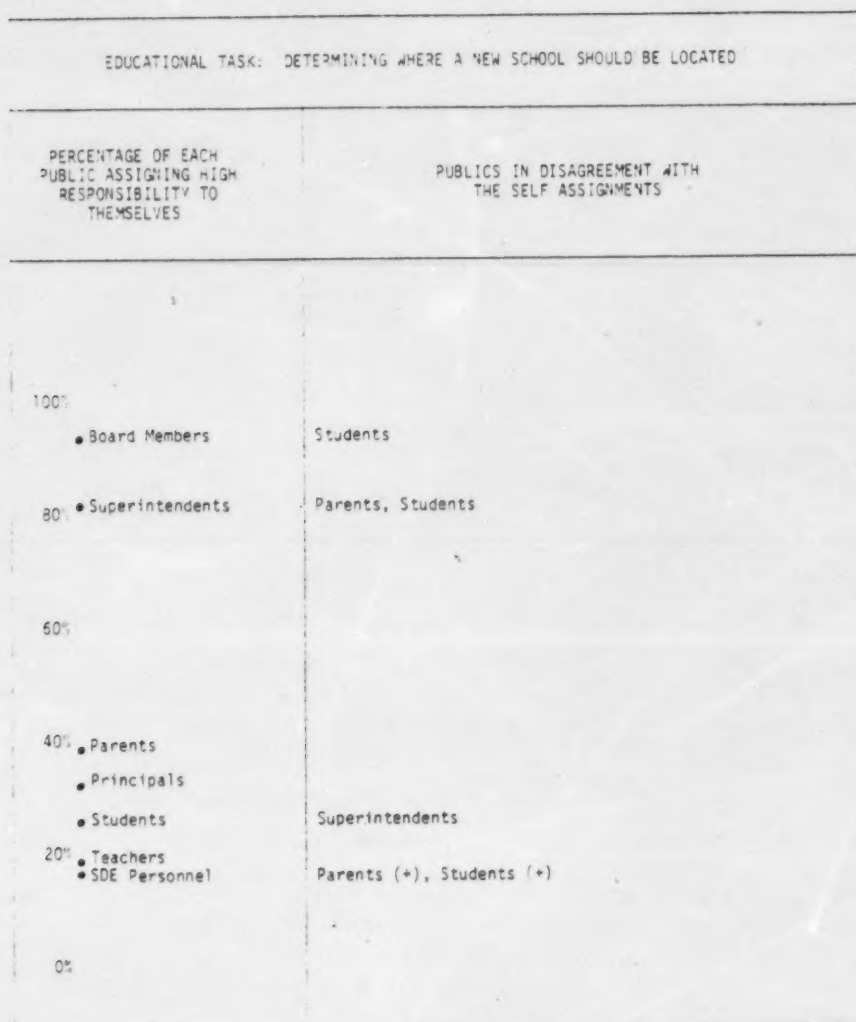
TABLE 17

EDUCATIONAL TASK: ESTABLISHING SCHOOL RULES	
PERCENTAGE OF EACH PUBLIC ASSIGNING HIGH TASK RESPONSIBILITY TO THEMSELVES	PUBLICS IN DISAGREEMENT WITH THE SELF ASSIGNMENTS
100% • Principals	
80% • Teachers	Students
60% • Superintendents • Board Members	Teachers, Students
40% • Students	
20% • Parents	
0% • SDE Personnel	Parents (+), Students (+)

EDUCATIONAL TASK: ESTABLISHING SCHOOL RULES

- Self-Assignments:** Nearly all principals assign themselves high responsibility for this task. A high percentage of teachers also assign themselves such responsibility.
- Agreements:** There is agreement regarding the self-assignment of most of the publics. Principals in particular are unchallenged as having high responsibility for this task.
- Disagreements:** Students disagree with the self-assignment of teachers and superintendents and along with parents, would assign greater responsibility to SDE personnel than SDE personnel assign to themselves.
- Comments:** With the exception of certain student opinions there seems to be general agreement as to who should have high responsibility for "Establishing School Rules".

TABLE 18



EDUCATIONAL TASK: DETERMINING WHERE A NEW SCHOOL SHOULD BE LOCATED

Self-Assignments: Board members and superintendents assign themselves high responsibility for this task while parents, principals, students, teachers and SDE personnel assign themselves relatively little responsibility.

Agreements: All publics except students agree with the high self-assignment of board members. All publics agree with the low self-assignments of parents, principals and teachers.

Disagreements: Students and parents would give SDE personnel more responsibility than SDE personnel give themselves. Students also assign board members and superintendents less responsibility than those two publics give to themselves.

Comments: Overall there is little disagreement about this task.

Each of the preceding tables was designed to permit analysis of potential conflicts regarding responsibility for specific tasks. These same conflicts can be summarized in some more general ways that may also be useful. For example, some of the tasks elicit more conflict than others. Table 19 ranks the tasks from high to low according to the total number of conflicts in perceived responsibility for the tasks. This indicates that the tasks "Selecting Textbooks" and "Determining the Type of Teaching Techniques That Should Be Used" elicit the greatest number of conflicts, while the task "Resolving Conflicts between Students and Teachers" elicit the least conflicts. Looking at the table another way, of the total number of conflicts slightly more than half of them occur in the following 5 tasks:

- Selecting Textbooks
- Determining the Type of Teaching Techniques That Should Be Used
- Determining How Much Money Teachers Should Be Paid
- Determining Whether Teachers Are Doing What They Are Supposed To Do
- Determining What Should Be Taught in Schools

TABLE 19

Tasks ranked according to the total number of times
publics disagree with the self-assignments of
responsibility for the task

Task	Number of Disagreements
Selecting Textbooks	17
Determining the Type of Teaching Techniques That Should Be Used	17
Determining Whether Teachers Are Doing What They Are Supposed To Do	16
Determining How Much Money Teachers Should Be Paid	14
Determining What Should Be Taught in Schools	11
Improving the Quality of Teaching	9
Establishing Graduation Requirements	9
Determining the Number of Students per Teacher	9
Determining the Type of Teacher To Be Hired	8
Telling the Community What the School Is Doing	7
Determining Where a New School Should Be Located	6
Providing Students With an Adequate Diet	5
Enforcing School Rules	5
Establishing School Rules	5
Resolving the Personal Problems of Students	4
Resolving Conflicts between Students and Teachers	2

A second summation can be made regarding the fact that some publics disagree with the self-assignments more frequently than other publics. Table 20 shows that of the seven publics, students disagree with the self-assignment of other publics most frequently (36 times), while State Department of Education personnel disagreed least frequently (9 times).

TABLE 20

Number of times that each public disagrees with the self-assignment of responsibility of other publics

Public	Number of Disagreements
Students	36
Parents	25
Teachers	24
Superintendents	20
Board Members	18
Principals	12
State Department of Education Personnel	9

A third generalization can be made regarding publics whose self-assignments are most frequently the object of disagreement from other publics. Table 21 shows that the publics surveyed disagreed with the self-assignments of superintendents most frequently and with those of the principals least frequently.

TABLE 21

Number of times that a public's self-assignment of responsibility is the object of disagreement by another public

Public	Number of Disagreements
Superintendents	34
Students	22
State Department of Education Personnel	21
Teachers	20
Board Members	17
Parents	16
Principals	14

Finally, we can examine which publics disagree with one another most frequently. Table 22 summarizes the total number of times that specific publics disagree with each other regarding their respective self-assignments. For example, the total number of times that principals disagree with a self-assignment of parents, and parents disagree with a self-assignment of principals is 4. Thus, for each public we can locate the specific public or publics with whom the greatest potential for conflict regarding task responsibility exists.

TABLE 22
Number of times publics disagree with each
other's self-assignment of responsibility

	Principals	Parents	Board Members	Superin- tendents	Teachers	State Department of Education	Students
Principals	-	4	5	6	1	3	7
Parents	4	-	4	11	8	11	3
Board Members	5	4	-	2	9	2	13
Superintendents	6	11	2	-	12	4	19
Teachers	1	8	9	12	-	4	10
State Department of Education	3	11	2	4	4	-	6
Students	7	3	13	19	10	6	-

HIGHLIGHTS OF TABLE 22

Principals disagree most frequently with students (7)
and superintendents (6)

Parents disagree most frequently with superintendents (11)
and State Department of Education Personnel (11)

Board Members disagree most frequently with students (13)
and teachers (9)

Superintendents disagree most frequently with students (19)
and teachers (12)

Teachers disagree most frequently with superintendents (12)
and students (10)

State Department of Education Personnel disagree most
frequently with parents (11) and students (6)

Students disagree most frequently with superintendents (19)
and board members (13)

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to identify how seven key publics feel about the importance of selected educational tasks and to clarify the extent to which those publics agree as to who should have major responsibility for each task. The results of the study show that the tasks are considered to be important by all of the publics and that for each task there are unique patterns of expectations regarding task responsibility. The role which a given public expects itself to play is not necessarily the same as the role which other publics expect of it. These conflicts in role expectations may signal possible confusion and misunderstanding in accomplishing educational tasks. Accordingly it seems reasonable to think that the resolution of such conflicts could lead to a more effective educational process.

There are a number of ways in which both the methods and the results of the study might be used to encourage agreement in such matters. Perhaps the primary function of such information is to enhance communication between publics whose role expectations conflict. Such communication might occur in a number of ways and at a number of levels - state, county, and school.

The results of the study may serve as a meeting agenda for two or more publics. At the state level the data could be used as a basis for discussion by representatives of appropriate publics in face to face situations or directly by members of the publics through various forms of media.

Although the data does not reflect the attitude of publics in any given county or school it could be used to stimulate discussion of role expectations among those publics. For example, any combination of local publics could meet to consider whether the state-wide data reflects their own views. Subsequent discussion could explore potential conflicts and ways of resolving those differences. Additionally, local publics may wish to conduct a similar study that would identify patterns of expected responsibility for tasks appropriate to their particular locale.

In short, if indeed the outcomes of the educational process are influenced by the home and community as well as the school, then a better understanding of how those elements can best work together should lead to improved student outcomes. This study and subsequent discussions offer one step in that improvement process.

APPENDIX

IMPORTANCE OF SELECTED EDUCATIONAL TASKS

The following tasks are commonly associated with educating High School students. Please put a CHECK (✓) in the column which best describes your opinion about the importance of each task. The first task is provided as an example.

TASK	HOW IMPORTANT IS THE TASK?			
	HIGH IMPORTANCE	MEDIUM IMPORTANCE	SLIGHT IMPORTANCE	NO IMPORTANCE
<u>EXAMPLE:</u>				
Providing a well equipped gymnasium		✓		
1. Determining the type of teacher to be hired				
2. Improving the quality of teaching				
3. Determining how much money teachers should be paid				
4. Resolving the personal problems of students				
5. Selecting textbooks				
6. Determining the type of teaching techniques that should be used				
7. Providing students with an adequate diet				
8. Telling the community what the school is doing				
9. Establishing graduation requirements				
10. Enforcing school rules				
11. Determining what should be taught in schools				
12. Resolving conflicts between students and teachers				
13. Determining whether teachers are doing what they are supposed to do				
14. Determining the number of students per teacher				
15. Establishing school rules				
16. Determining where a new school should be located				



RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SELECTED EDUCATIONAL TASKS

The following tasks are commonly associated with educating High School students. Please put a CHECK (✓) in the column that tells how much responsibility you think each group should have for the task. The first task is provided as an example.

TASK	GROUPS	WHAT DEGREE OF RESPONSIBILITY SHOULD EACH HAVE?			
		High	Medium	Low	None
EXAMPLE:					
PROVIDING A WELL EQUIPPED GYMNASIUM	High School Principal	✓			
	High School Student		✓		
	Parent		✓		
	County Board of Education		✓		
	State Department of Education			✓	
	County Superintendent		✓		
	High School Teacher				✓
1. DETERMINING THE TYPE OF TEACHER TO BE HIRED	High School Principal				
	High School Student				
	Parent				
	County Board of Education				
	State Department of Education				
	County Superintendent				
	High School Teacher				
2. IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING	High School Principal				
	High School Student				
	Parent				
	County Board of Education				
	State Department of Education				
	County Superintendent				
	High School Teacher				
3. DETERMINING HOW MUCH MONEY TEACHERS SHOULD BE PAID	High School Principal				
	High School Student				
	Parent				
	County Board of Education				
	State Department of Education				
	County Superintendent				
	High School Teacher				
4. RESOLVING THE PERSONAL PROBLEMS OF STUDENTS	High School Principal				
	High School Student				
	Parent				
	County Board of Education				
	State Department of Education				
	County Superintendent				
	High School Teacher				

TASK	GROUPS	WHAT DEGREE OF RESPONSIBILITY SHOULD EACH HAVE?			
		High	Medium	Low	None
5. SELECTING TEXTBOOKS	High School Principal				
	High School Student				
	Parent				
	County Board of Education				
	State Department of Education				
	County Superintendent				
	High School Teacher				
6. DETERMINING THE TYPE OF TEACHING TECHNIQUES THAT SHOULD BE USED	High School Principal				
	High School Student				
	Parent				
	County Board of Education				
	State Department of Education				
	County Superintendent				
	High School Teacher				
7. PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH AN ADEQUATE DIET	High School Principal				
	High School Student				
	Parent				
	County Board of Education				
	State Department of Education				
	County Superintendent				
	High School Teacher				
8. TELLING THE COMMUNITY WHAT THE SCHOOL IS DOING	High School Principal				
	High School Student				
	Parent				
	County Board of Education				
	State Department of Education				
	County Superintendent				
	High School Teacher				
9. ESTABLISHING GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS	High School Principal				
	High School Student				
	Parent				
	County Board of Education				
	State Department of Education				
	County Superintendent				
	High School Teacher				
10. ENFORCING SCHOOL RULES	High School Principal				
	High School Student				
	Parent				
	County Board of Education				
	State Department of Education				
	County Superintendent				
	High School Teacher				



TASK	GROUPS	WHAT DEGREE OF RESPONSIBILITY SHOULD EACH HAVE?			
		High	Medium	Low	None
11. DETERMINING WHAT SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS	High School Principal				
	High School Student				
	Parent				
	County Board of Education				
	State Department of Education				
	County Superintendent				
	High School Teacher				
12. RESOLVING CONFLICTS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND TEACHERS	High School Principal				
	High School Student				
	Parent				
	County Board of Education				
	State Department of Education				
	County Superintendent				
	High School Teacher				
13. DETERMINING WHETHER TEACHERS ARE DOING WHAT THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO DO	High School Principal				
	High School Student				
	Parent				
	County Board of Education				
	State Department of Education				
	County Superintendent				
	High School Teacher				
14. DETERMINING THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS PER TEACHER	High School Principal				
	High School Student				
	Parent				
	County Board of Education				
	State Department of Education				
	County Superintendent				
	High School Teacher				
15. ESTABLISHING SCHOOL RULES	High School Principal				
	High School Student				
	Parent				
	County Board of Education				
	State Department of Education				
	County Superintendent				
	High School Teacher				
16. DETERMINING WHERE A NEW SCHOOL SHOULD BE LOCATED	High School Principal				
	High School Student				
	Parent				
	County Board of Education				
	State Department of Education				
	County Superintendent				
	High School Teacher				